

Date: Sat, 16 Oct 93 04:30:20 PDT  
From: Ham-Digital Mailing List and Newsgroup <ham-digital@ucsd.edu>  
Errors-To: Ham-Digital-Errors@UCSD.Edu  
Reply-To: Ham-Digital@UCSD.Edu  
Precedence: Bulk  
Subject: Ham-Digital Digest V93 #75  
To: Ham-Digital

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Today's Topics:

Public Apology (2 msgs)  
The header standard

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Send subscription requests to: <Ham-Digital-REQUEST@UCSD.Edu>  
Problems you can't solve otherwise to brian@ucsd.edu.

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We trust that readers are intelligent enough to realize that all text  
herein consists of personal comments and does not represent the official  
policies or positions of any party. Your mileage may vary. So there.

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Date: 15 Oct 1993 06:45:17 GMT  
From: korie!sh.wide!wnoc-kyo!daemun.rcac!reseau!kenji@ames.arpa  
Subject: Public Apology  
To: ham-digital@ucsd.edu

A host's sysop has the final words on what he/she wants to store on  
his/her systems. Period.

// Kenji, JJ1BDX/3

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Kenji Rikitake <kenji@k2r.or.jp> <kenji@rcac.astem.or.jp>

"If privacy is outlawed, only outlaws will have privacy."

-- Philip Zimmermann, PGP User's Guide

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Date: 15 Oct 1993 06:49:49 GMT  
From: swrinde!sdd.hp.com!spool.mu.edu!olivea!korie!sh.wide!wnoc-kyo!daemun.rcac!  
reseau!kenji@network.ucsd.edu  
Subject: Public Apology  
To: ham-digital@ucsd.edu

In article <2431@arrl.org> jlbloom@arrl.org (Jon Bloom, KE3Z) writes:  
|Thanks for the update, Jack. Now I remember why I quit checking into the  
|local PBBS. It's interesting to see that the intellectual level of PBBS  
|traffic hasn't risen any.

And it's sad to hear that it's not only in Japan that we have to see  
silly words on PBBSes :p

// Kenji

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Kenji Rikitake <kenji@k2r.or.jp> <kenji@rcac.astem.or.jp>

"If privacy is outlawed, only outlaws will have privacy."

-- Philip Zimmermann, PGP User's Guide

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Date: Fri, 15 Oct 93 11:58:13 PDT  
From: almaden.ibm.com@uunet.uu.net  
Subject: The header standard  
To: ham-digital@ucsd.edu

Here is the original header standard. The '\$:' was added later  
after BIDs were invented :-)

Roy, AA4RE

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R:870114/0819p S:870114/1206p AA4RE-1, Gilroy, CA -- 4983/NK6K  
R:870113/1606 @:NK6K Redondo Beach, CA #: 4104 0:NK6K F:145.36/.01

Headers - a compromise proposal.  
(1/13/87)

Note: These comments are necessarily terse, to make them easier to  
forward. This proposal is based on input from VE3GYQ, W3IWI,  
NK6K, WB6KAJ, and WB6YMH.

Executive summary.

A standard header format is proposed that permits 1) machine  
parsable headers, 2) human readability, 3) extendability  
4) standard non-standard information.

Why we need a standard.

There are at least two programs waiting to be written that require a machine readable header. One is a subroutine for BBSes that can find the originating BBS and send a service message back. The other is a FWD.TNC file generator that can determine paths and connectivity by examining passing headers. There are more.

There is also a desire on the part of sysops to be able to rapidly scan a message by eye to look for bad routing, loops, dups, and delays. This task could be done programatically, but won't be for some time to come, and will never be performed by simpler programs on smaller machines.

Why the current standards are not sufficient.

Aside from the Sent and Received times, the R:S: format as current specified does not provide an easy way to programatically determine the following pieces of information: Originating User, message number. These items have been stated as necessary by a number of BBS sysops.

The /this/that/ standard does not provide enough visual fidelity to permit the eyeball scan to take place. This is the reason most often cited for the lack of converts to this standard. The other shortfall is the lack of ability to add regional information in a standard way. Some areas or networks want additional information such as frequencies and grid, areacode, airport, or other positional identifiers. In a fixed field format where the item is identified by its location, null fields would abound when handling several optional special items, e.g. /call/call/city/state/rtime////freq//stime/.

As of late, there are at least three different versions of the /that/that/ "standard", one with an area code field, one with a separate state field, and one without either. This of course invalidates an otherwise acceptable standard due to its dependence on field order.

Attributes of an acceptable standard.

Based on the stated wishes of developers, the following are the requirements of a well-formed header: Each field can be identified by a program. Some fields are required.

Based on the stated wishes of some Sysops/Users, the requirements

are: the header is eyeball-readable, the individual sysop can add information to suit his local needs.

Stated more formally:

1. Meet FCC third party requirements (whatever they are)
2. Be compatible with existing software (able to be emitted)
3. Be machine readable (read: easy to parse)
4. Provide all necessary information
5. Provide flexibility for optional information
6. Provide some degree of user friendliness (read: looks nice)

Note: These comments are necessarily terse, to make them easier to forward. This proposal is based on input from VE3GYQ, W3IWI, NK6K, WB6KAJ, and WB6YMH.

The proposal.

These requirements are not mutually exclusive. Rather than use the fixed field/positional style of the /this/that/ standard to meet the machine readable requirement, a field identifier is proposed for each field. Note that the R:S: standard is already close to this. The only thing lost over the /this/that/ format is some efficiency, more characters are sent. Losses of efficiency are common when humans are involved.

Proposed header format (for the machine readable camp):

```
<header line>      ::= <header field> [<header field>...]
<header field>     ::= <field identifier> <field contents>
<field identifier> ::= <field type> ':'
<field type>       ::= any printable ASCII character except ':'
<field contents>   ::= a string of printable ASCII characters except ':'
```

Rules:

1. The ':' character may only be used as the termination character of a field type specifier
2. The minimum items which should be included in ALL headers are:
  - a) The callsign of the node relaying the message.
  - b) The time the message was received.

Items very (very) strongly recommended for all headers:

- a) the message number of the relaying node.
- b) the callsign of the station originating the message.

c) the location of the node relaying the message.

Optional information:

- a) Additional location information
  - 1. Grid squares
  - 2. Area codes
  - 3. longitude/latitude
- b) Frequency of operation of node
- c) time message was sent by node
- d) Network name
- e) group name
- f) Major maildrop (nearest major node)

Field Identifiers: (Note new field types may be defined as required)

#: message number  
@: Node callsign followed by optional location  
A: node ALIAS  
F: frequency of operation. If gateway multiple frequencies are separated by "/"  
G: Grid square of node  
L: Long/Lat of node  
M: Major node callsign (nearest major relaying node, the APR proposal)  
N: Group, node, or network name  
O: callsign of originating station  
P: Telephone Area code of node  
R: Time message was received  
S: Time message was sent

While many of the above fields may be deemed of value by different people the following suggested format is recommended

R:861003/0739z @:W1BBS Packet city, KA #:1234 O:W1ABC

Note if the timezone letter is not included it should be replaced with a space to preserve field alignment for visual fidelity.

This header line provides the minimum information which is deemed necessary by large number of SYSOPs, based on current discussions.

The proposed header format allows much flexibility for the individual sysop's without compromising the ability of software to extract the needed information. Following is an example of different headers which conform to this standard. Visual fidelity and machine readability is maintained.

R:861003/0701z @:KB3UD, East Bangor, Pa, G:FN20jv  
R:861003/0641z @:K3RLI Wilkes-Barre, PA F:145.01/145.05  
R:861003/0430 @:N2AYY-1 Glens Falls, NY O:W1ABC  
R:861002/2040z @:WA1FHB, Marlow NH #:5432  
R:861002/1741z @:WB1DSW O:W1ABC S:861002/2039z  
R:861002/1523z @:W9ZRX #:8768  
R:861001/1240 @:WB6KAJ  
R:861001/1836 @:W6AXM-1 M:WB6KAJ O:W1ABC P:714

Final Notes: The above differs from the current R:S: standard in that the S: field is missing from the first part. For visual fidelity to be maintained, all stations must agree to use the first two fields in that order. Those wishing to send the S: field may do so later in the header. Dropping the S: from the required fields is based on the premise that the S: field of a station can be inferred from the R: field of the next station.

The RLI/MBL format for the minimum required format is:

R:\$J/\$Kz @:\$0 location #:\$M O:\$P

The "z" is replaced by a space if the BBS uses local time.

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End of Ham-Digital Digest V93 #75

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